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NOTES ON MAHAYANA BUDDHISM.

III. MAHAYANA BUDDHISM AS PSYCHOLOGY.

The Existence of the Soul.—We now come to a discussion of what many consider the most difficult part of Buddhism, and which is, beyond doubt, the point most misunderstood by all Occidental students of that faith, whether Hinayana or Mahayana—the question as to the nature of the soul. It is often said that Buddhism denies the existence of the soul, but this is a gross misrepresentation. It does, indeed, reject the idea of the soul being an absolute thing, a thing in itself, but to Buddhism the existence of the soul, though only as a compound, is a thing indisputable and not requiring proof.

In order to understand fully the teachings of the Buddha concerning the nature and fate of the soul, it is first of all necessary to know something of the psychological opinions which were current in India at the time of his life. According to these, the “soul” consisted of a collection of “bodies”—the material, the emotional, mental, spiritual, etc.—which are constantly changing, but which are united by a permanent and unchanging *atman* or ego-entity.¹⁶ Now Hinayana affirms, as also does Mahayana in its negative phase, the same idea of the soul, except that it denies such a thing as an *atman* which binds the various “bodies”

¹⁶ It is to be noted that there is a sharp difference between Christianity and Hinduism in regard to the soul, though both accept its absolute existence. In a general way, however, it may be said that the “soul” of Paul corresponds to the various bodies taken together and the “spirit” to the *atman*.

together. In other words, it teaches that the soul consists of five *skandahs* (mental qualities) which have been gathered together as a result of the actions of a former group of skandahs, and that the only link between them is the sequence of cause and effect.

The Atman in Mahayana.—Mahayana in its positive phase, however, in contradistinction to Hinayana, differs a little from this. The atman, according to Brahmanism, is a spark of the divine, and Mahayana, in the sense that each individual is a manifestation of the divine, teaches that there is an atman. It holds, however, that there is only one atman, the Bhutatathata of which we are all aspects, and that the divine spirit within A is not different from the divine spirit within B. In other words, the distinction between Mahayana and the popular Hindu theory of the atman, is that the latter teaches that there was originally one great ocean of life (Parabrahm) from which a portion has been taken and put into each individual so that the divine drop within each person is distinct and separate from that of every other person, and all the drops, in turn, are separate and distinct from the great ocean; while Mahayana, on the other hand, holds that there is only the great ocean (Bhutatahata) and that although there are many waves (personalities) the real essence of each wave (the water) remains at one with the other waves.¹⁷

In short, the Mahayanist asserts that the great divine ocean, if it be truly divine, must be omnipresent and all-pervading, and that consequently we must all exist in it. Now if we live in the divine ocean, and the drop within each one of us is of exactly the same nature as the ocean itself (as Hinduism teaches) it follows necessarily that the drop must be one with the universal ocean and indistin-

¹⁷ As a matter of fact, several of the Vedantin schools of India hold to the Mahayana idea on this point, thus making Mahayana and Vedantism almost identical, except of course for verbal and minor differences, and they may be regarded as different sects of the same religion rather than as separate and distinct faiths.

guishable from it, just as a drop is one with and indistinguishable in the material ocean.¹⁸ Certainly, however false or true either one of the two theories may be, that of Mahayana is the more logical.

The Persistence of the Personality.—But, it may be objected, however fine this may be theoretically, what of its practical application? What of the survival of the personality? Does Buddhism deny or affirm that the individuality, the I and the you, continue to exist after death? Buddhism in answer to this question, affirms, characteristically, that it both does and does not, or, in other words, that it persists in one sense and does not persist in another sense. This, of course, at first sight seems foolish and illogical, but Buddhism will point out the human body in defense—in one sense it persists from year to year while in another sense it does not, for we all know that the particles of which the body is composed are constantly changing, and physiology even tells us that in seven years it is an entirely new body, having not a single material thing in it which it had seven years previously, and yet do we not speak at the same time of the same body persisting from babyhood until death? In the same way the Buddhist will speak of the persistence and non-persistence of the soul. The point which we have noted—namely that according to Buddhism the soul is a compound thing and not a thing in itself—must not be forgotten. Excepting the four limbs, the trunk and the head, where is the body? In like manner according to Buddhism, excepting the five skandahs, where is the individual soul? And as we know the body, i. e., matter which composes the limbs, trunk, and head, is constantly changing, therefore says the Buddhist, why not the soul?

¹⁸ Except that the material ocean is composed of atoms and that, since space must exist between atoms, the water does not really cover all the space it seemingly occupies. The divine ocean, however, must be non-atomical since it is absolutely omnipresent, and consequently no space however minute can divide one portion from another.

The Nature of the Individuality.—This question as to the persistence and the non-persistence of the personality may be likened to the wheel of a cart, a simile which has often been used by Buddhist writers since it gives an excellent idea of *non-atman*—for except for the hub, spokes, and rim, what is there? Now supposing that one of the spokes on the wheel were to wear out and were replaced, and then another, and so on, and finally the hub and the rim; there would be nothing left of the original wheel, and yet we would be justified in speaking about it, in one sense, as the same wheel. We would be justified in saying that the personality (that is the actual materials) of the wheel is constantly changing and is perishable, yet we may also say that the individuality (that is the wheel taken as a whole) persists, though by individuality we do not mean a certain concrete thing, such as the hub, or one of the spokes, or the rim. This remains changeless in the midst of change. In like manner the Buddhist declares that while the individuality is ever changing, the individuality continues, though by individuality is meant not an imperishable ego-entity, but merely the sequence of cause and effect.

The Law of Karma.—Buddhism is essentially scientific inasmuch as it lays especial stress upon the law of cause and effect, or in Buddhist phraseology, *karma*, that which Saint Paul spoke of when he said, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." All philosophies have in a general way accepted it, but Buddhism has given it especial emphasis. This fact, considering that Buddhism was formulated centuries before the time of Christ, long before the discovery of the laws of the conservation of matter, and of energy, is little less than remarkable.

Karma to Buddhism, however, has a little different significance than to any other religious or philosophical system, on account of its denial of the ego-entity. Karma, or the idea of retribution, in other systems means that what

a personality sows it reaps, while in Buddhism it signifies the method of the formation of a new personality as well. Here again, when the idea thus seems difficult to understand, physiology comes to the rescue. Take the body for example: in one sense it may be said that the body reaps what it sows—thus when it has been strongly under the influence of liquor it has a headache—yet to speak more exactly, an intoxicated body causes the formation of an ill body, for if the body is not the same for two consecutive moments, it follows that in one sense the body which was intoxicated is a different one from that body which suffers the consequences.

In like manner, the karma of our present personality will, according to Buddhism, result in the formation of a new personality, though, as we have already seen, the two personalities are in one sense identical. Thus, for example, we are told that the deeds and thoughts of a vicious man will, upon his death, result in the formation of a new personality in one of the hells, just as those of the virtuous man in one of the heavens.

Reincarnation.—Buddhism of both branches, however, in addition to the idea of a rebirth in a heaven or hell, teaches that a reincarnation may also occur on earth. In other words, the karma or the fruits of our actions, whether good or bad, will result in the formation of a new personality in this world again. In this way, Buddhism accounts for the many seeming injustices which are everywhere apparent and which, in the West, have been the cause of so much questioning as to the wisdom and mercy of God, since, of course, Buddhism teaches that the state of the new personality will be conditioned by the acts of its predecessor.

I have used the words “new personality” and “predecessor,” but, as has already been noted, it is in one way the same person who both sows and reaps. Certainly it is

far nearer the truth to say that they are absolutely identical than that they are absolutely different, just as it is far nearer the truth to say that the man who committed a murder and the man who is justly hanged for it is the same than that they are two different individuals.

Buddhism, however, since it rejects the idea of a mysterious ego-entity which departs from one body and goes into another, prefers to speak not of transmigration, which gives too atmanistic a conception, but of reincarnation or rebirth. What is it that is reborn? As we have already seen, it is the karma of the dead man, the fruit of his deeds, and in that sense the man himself; but it is also more than that, since Buddhism teaches that a man's desires or wishes are reincarnated. What are we but a bundle of sensations and desires? Yet Buddhism assures us that these wishes live on in the new personality long after the old personality has decayed.

The Nature of the Rebirth.—While the Buddha affirmed the truth of the idea of reincarnation in no uncertain terms, many of the questions as to the exact method by which it occurred were left unanswered by him. In popular Hinduism, the atman was supposed to leave the old body at death at the top of the head and enter into the body newly prepared for it, by the same means. In Buddhism with its denial of the atman, this was of course impossible, but the Buddha as far as we have any authentic record, does not seem to have taken the trouble to formulate any substitute hypothesis as to the nature of the link between the two personalities; nor has Mahayana, in spite of its development along other lines, ever apparently felt the need of dealing more in detail with the matter.

Then too, Buddhism, while closely linking the ideas of retribution and reincarnation, has never been very explicit as to just what does determine the future state of man, whether it is his deeds or his thoughts alone, or both. In

the different moral stories which the Buddha is supposed to have related concerning his own and others' past lives, the cause of the state of existence varies widely. Sometimes it would appear to be the net balance of the whole of a man's actions, sometimes a single exceptional thought or deed, or again it would be merely the result of a strong desire held when the person was dying. The reincarnation is not, according to popular Buddhism, limited to the human kingdom, it being possible for a man to be reborn as an animal, and *vice versa*, while, on the other hand, a man may rise and in his next existence become a god.

There is also some ambiguity as to whether the "soul" enters at once into a new physical body or remains in a disembodied form for some time. Some of the *Jataka* or rebirth tales would seem to imply the former, but modern Mahayana for the most part holds that the person remains some time in one of the heavens or hells before being reincarnated. This metempsychosis continues until Nirvana or Buddhahood is attained, when one at length secures freedom from the chain of birth and death.

IV. MAHAYANA BUDDHISM AS ETHICS.

Anatman and Morality.—It is often objected that the Buddhist conception of the soul is conducive to immortality. If people think, it is alleged, that if even in one sense it is another person who will reap the benefits of their good deeds, they will cease from striving, or that another person will be punished for their vices, they will give themselves over to licentiousness. The Buddhist will answer, however, that this conception is justified neither by logic nor by its results in the countries where the doctrine of *anatman* has been applied. Look at the people of China and Japan, and the other Buddhist nations, he will say, and whatever may be their individual moral failings, one must note that they go on striving in order that their next birth may be

a fortunate one. We find them in their old age rejoicing at the fact that they will soon be provided with a new body: we find them praying that they may be reborn in the Pure Land (*jodo*) that they may more quickly enter Nirvana. And this not because of the fact that among the lower classes the idea of anatman is not fully understood or believed, as has been sometimes objected, for I have found by personal observation that the peasants as well as the educated classes are acquainted in a general way with the doctrine and fully believe in it. And, certainly, even supposing that the objection were true, do we not find among the monks who assuredly comprehend and uphold it, a rigid morality, a stern austerity? It would be nearer the truth, the Buddhist will affirm, to say that in actual life the idea leads to asceticism rather than to self-indulgence.

Moreover, he will go further than this, for he will cite the behavior of people all the world over. The body that swallows the poison is not the same body (in one sense) that dies—but does that mean that a knowledge of and belief in this fact causes men to drink strychnine? We know that the man who eats injudiciously and the man who suffers the consequences are in one sense different, yet knowing this fact are we any less careful of our digestions? The person who carefully saves his money and the person who at the end of a lifetime has the fortune are as much different as Buddhism teaches that he will be in his next life, yet would it be fair, argues the Buddhist, to lay all extravagance to this fact? Why, therefore, he will argue, should we say that the doctrine of anatman leads to immorality?

The Threefold Path.—What, then, is the moral law of Buddhism? What is it that the Buddha instructed his disciples to do in order to acquire merit? Speaking on this subject, the Rt. Rev. Shaku Soyen, Head Abbot of the Zen sect and one of the leading lights of Buddhism, says,

"It (the moral law) is threefold, (1) to cease from doing evil; (2) to promote goodness; and (3) to enlighten the ignorant. In this conception, Buddhist ethics is the simplest thing in the world. In the latter part of the Tang dynasty in China there was a famous poet-statesman who is known in Japanese as Hak-rak-ten. He learned that there resided in his district a Buddhist monk greatly noted for his saintly life and scholarly learning, and he went to see him intending to discourse with him on some deep religious subjects. Ushered in to his presence, the poet inquired what the monk thought to be the most influential thing in Buddhism. The monk replied without hesitation that it was the teaching of all unenlightened beings, to cease from doing evil, to promote goodness, and to purify one's heart. Hak-rak-ten was nonplussed to receive such a commonplace from such a renowned personage professing the faith of Buddhism, for he had expected something highly speculative and metaphysical. . . . The poet therefore sharply retorted, "This is what every child of three summers is acquainted with. I, on the other hand, desire to know what is most abstruse, most essential and vital in Buddhism." The monk, however, coldly replied, "Every child of three summers may know what I said now, but even a silver-haired old man of eighty winters finds it difficult to put the Buddhist instructions into the practice of every-day life." And it is said that thereupon the poet-statesman reverentially bowed and went home full of thought.

The Eightfold Path.—As a matter of fact, however, Buddhist morality is by no means as simple as that, since we have elaborations of this threefold path in many shapes and guises. The most noted of these, because of the fact that it is supposed to have been preached by the Buddha himself, is the so-called Noble Eightfold Path, which we

have already seen to be one of the points common to Mahayana and Hinayana alike.

This is, as has been seen, (1) right belief or comprehension, (2) right aspiration, (3) right speech, (4) right deeds, (5) right mode of livelihood, (6) right effort or endeavor, (7) right mindfulness or self-discipline, and lastly (8) right rapture or ecstasy. This division of the moral code is simple (almost childish, one might say) yet covers practically all the ground. One or two things about it, however, require especial notice. To begin with, what in Christian terminology would be called *faith* is regarded as only one of eight necessary qualifications, amounting to much less than in Christian theology; yet, considering the influence it has upon one's character, the Buddha was certainly justified in putting it first and foremost in his list of the necessary virtues. The Buddha also evidently recognized the truth which was expressed by the Hebrew prophet who proclaimed that where there is no vision the people perish, when he placed "right aspiration" or the possession of high ideals as one of the most important of the moral qualifications. The only other point which requires any explanation is the seventh one, namely, that of self-discipline. It must not be supposed from this that Buddhism teaches asceticism or self-mortification, since we know that the Buddha made it one of his especial aims to denounce the absurd lengths to which the Hindus of his day had gone in this respect. In fact we find him proclaiming in his first sermon, "There are two extremes which he who has gone forth¹⁹ ought not to follow—habitual devotion to the passions on the one hand, to the pleasures of sensual things, etc., and habitual devotion on the other hand to self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and unprofitable." And we find throughout his life, his

¹⁹ This term signifies one who seeks after enlightenment, and is the word which is commonly used to express this idea.

use of the word "the Middle Path" (between the two extremes) to denote his teachings.

The Fetters of the Path.—In addition to the positive moral code which has been outlined, Buddhism has also a negative one, i. e., one which declares what things are evil and to be avoided. First and foremost there are the four intoxicants which hold back the seeker after enlightenment, namely, (1) mental infatuation arising from sensual pleasures, (2) that which arises from pride of life, (3) from ignorance, and lastly (4) from useless speculation over what is unsolvable.

Then there are the ten chief bonds, or lions in the Path: (1) belief in the atman, (2) doubt, (3) dependence upon works, (4) sensuality, (5) hatred, (6) desire for rebirth on earth, (7) or in heaven, (8) conceit, (9) self-righteousness, and last but not least (10) ignorance. These bonds may be classified into five groups consisting of: (1) the first three, which are supposed to be swept away upon "conversion" to Buddhism (if I may be permitted such a word); (2) next the fourth and the fifth, the so-called coarser bonds; (3) then the sixth and the seventh, the finer bonds, of desire; (4) then pride and self-righteousness against which the Christ so vigorously protested; and lastly (5) ignorance, the final fetter, which when cast aside gives perfect enlightenment to the seeker.

The Practical Side of Buddhist Morality.—Such may be said to be the theoretical side of Buddhist morality, the mental states to be cultivated and avoided, etc., but in addition to this, Buddhist morality has also its practical aspect. Speaking generally it may be said that this aspect has five chief features, namely, (1) non-sensuality, (2) sobriety, (3) harmlessness, (4) truthfulness, and (5) honesty. Of the first, of the necessity of leading a chaste life, we have already spoken, lust being one of the ten bonds above mentioned. The Buddha seems to have laid especial

emphasis on this point, and we find the Sutra of the Forty-Two Sections, one of the principal Mahayana Sutras, declaring as the words of the Buddha, that it were well that there is no other fetter as powerful as lust, since if there were, to follow the Noble Path would then be impossible. Concerning the second point, it is of interest to note that the Buddha was evidently several centuries ahead of his time as far as the drink problem is concerned, since we find him forbidding the partaking of all forms of alcoholic liquors. The third feature shows itself in an unwillingness to kill any creature, whether human or animal. In consequence of this we have two further main precepts of Buddhism, non-resistance and vegetarianism. The fourth and fifth precepts are, of course, common to all ethics as well as to all religions, and so require no further explanation or elucidation.

Non-Observance of the Moral Law.—As is the case with Christian morality in Christian countries, many points of the high and stern moral law of the Buddha are often relaxed in individual observance. One of the principal reasons for this may be found in the external organization of Buddhism, which, whatever its merits may be, has certainly its demerits in this respect. According to strict Buddhism only the monks are true Buddhists, the laymen, however pious, are mere half-hearted ones. The priests are not, as in Christian countries, the leaders and teachers of the people, but persons who draw aside from the world that they may live a more perfect life and win enlightenment and salvation,²⁰ while the laymen are looked upon as those who outside of the church support the monks in "acquiring merit." Such an order of things would necessarily lead to laxity among the laymen, and accordingly not only do we find them marrying, as is of course to be expected, but also

²⁰ Here again the Shin Shu differs from ordinary Buddhism, inasmuch as its priests go out into the world far more than do the priests of the other sects, and their duties approach very nearly those of the Christian clergyman.

drinking wine and eating meat. However, enough of the Buddhist spirit prevails to cause butchers and brewers to be regarded as among the basest members of society, and an unwillingness is manifest to kill any animal directly even though it will be eaten without compunction after it has been slaughtered by some one else.

Another and stronger reason for the weakening of these basic rules, however, is that Mahayana (not Hinayana) Buddhism has absorbed something of the spirit of the end justifying the means. Thus while the Buddha preached of the value of peace at all costs, we find Mahayana teaching that while war is undoubtedly bad, it certainly would be worse to see the good suffer, and so, unlike Hinayana which still proclaims the doctrine of absolute non-resistance,²¹ we find the Mahayana priests not only not decrying war but actually encouraging it as long as they consider it a righteous one. In like manner they even encourage the eating of meat by soldiers since it has been found that flesh makes them healthier, on the grounds that while it is bad to eat meat, it is worse that the right side should suffer on account of weakness arising from the lack of it. Thus, too, in the case of marriage, while Hinayana only allows it on sufferance since it knows that it is impossible to prevent it altogether, Mahayana, on the other hand, encourages it in the case of the layman in order to propagate a healthy race. In fact we even find some of the Buddhist casuists maintaining that the telling of a falsehood is justified in some cases, though, wisely enough, less emphasis has been laid upon this point than might be, owing to the fact that it would be popularly misunderstood and taken advantage of.

The Morality of the Salvation-by-Faith School.—It is necessary, before closing this chapter on Buddhist morality,

²¹ For a striking illustration of the steady adherence of the Hinayana priests to the idea of non-resistance, see Fielding Hall, *The Soul of the People*, in the case of the British invasion of Burma.

to note something of the attitude of those sects of Mahayana Buddhism who profess the doctrine of the Pure Land. As we have already seen, they teach that Jodo or the highest heaven may be gained solely by faith in Amitabha (the Dharmakaya). Accordingly, to them asceticism in any guise is unknown, and like the Protestants, who, teaching practically the same doctrine as these sects, have done away with many of the fasts and penances of the Catholics, so has the Jodo or Sukhavati school (to give it the Sanskrit name) abnegated many of the practices of the salvation-by-works branch, and the most powerful branch of the sect in Japan, the Shin Shu, even allows its priests to marry and eat meat, etc.

It must not be supposed from this, however, that they have done away with morality in the ethical sense of that word, for we find them even more insistent than their brethren of the salvation-by-works school upon the necessity of every one, layman and cleric alike, leading a pure and holy life. With them, however, besides ordinary moral duties, there is the necessity of repeating the formula *Namu Amida Bu* or *Butsu*, frequently contracted to *Nembutsu*.²² With one branch of this school the very reciting of the name is in the nature of a meritorious deed and accordingly whoever does so worthy of rebirth in the Pure Land, but in the Shin Shu the mere reciting is of no effect, but is simply a sign of faith in Amida, like the Protestant idea of the nature of good works after justification.

V. MAHAYANA BUDDHISM TO-DAY.

The Origin of Mahayana Buddhism.—Now just a word as to the origin of Mahayana. Many persons who are but

²² The exact translation of this phrase is, *namu* "praise (to)," *Amida* a contraction of Amitabha, the Dharmakaya, and *Bu* or *Butsu* a contraction of Buddha, Amida being regarded as the great universal Buddha. Jodo priests and laymen go through their rosaries several times a day reciting this name, and the Chinese characters for the phrase are engraved at all sacred places of the sect, thus having the advantage over the Christian monogram, IHS, in that it can both be seen and heard.

little acquainted with the subject are under the impression that Mahayana as it is to-day, is a purely Chinese and Japanese product, or in other words, that it is the result of the failure of the Japanese and Chinese minds to understand or receive the doctrines of pure Buddhism as it was originally preached to them. This is entirely a mistake, for although Mahayana has acquired several new phases since its introduction into the Far East, yet we shall find that as far as all essentials go, the doctrines of Mahayana may be traced back to the native home of all Buddhism, India.

Buddhism was originally far more elastic than at present; accordingly we find in the first centuries after the death of the Buddha, widely different aspects of Buddhism existing side by side in a somewhat nebulous state. The bases of all later philosophies may be found there, but practically undeveloped, and often not clearly expressed. As time went on, these various phases of Buddhism gradually hardened and crystallized, the differences between the various schools were noted and harped upon, and we may notice the gradual drawing apart of several chief divisions. These divisions and schools are too numerous to be touched upon here, but they may be classified in a general way into the two main trends of thought which later developed into the schools of Hinayana and Mahayana as they exist to-day.

Early Patriarchs of Mahayana.—Since, then, Mahayana was a gradual development, and not the result of the teaching of one man or school (unless, of course, we admit the Mahayana claim and say that it was Gautama), it is obviously impossible to point to any one person as the sole founder. One or two names, however, may be mentioned as being those who were most influential in developing and spreading its teachings. Thus we have Parçva and Punyayaças, both of India. They are chiefly known as being the

teachers of Aṣvaghosa, from whose writings we have already quoted, and who may be regarded, more than any one else, as the father of modern Mahayana. Of Aṣvaghosa's life we have only conflicting and unsatisfactory accounts, but it may be said that he lived somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era and was originally one of the leaders of the anti-Buddhistic Brahmans; he was converted to Buddhism and spent the remainder of his life, honored both by the nobles and the people, in propagating the doctrines of Buddhism as he understood them.

As Aṣvaghosa presented them, however, the doctrines of Mahayanism were still somewhat indistinct and unformed; but two or three centuries (accounts vary, some say less than a century) afterward there arose Nagarjuna, also an Indian, who made it his life's work to systematize its doctrines, and under whose endeavors Mahayanism took practically its present shape. Mahayanists are fond of calling Nagarjuna the second founder of Buddhism. From this time on it is impossible to trace the history of the new faith in detail. About 53 A. D. Buddhism was first introduced into China, where in spite of various persecutions under antagonistic rulers it continued to thrive. While the doctrines of Hinayana found favor in Burma, Siam, and Ceylon, those of Mahayana, as they were gradually elaborated, appealed more to the Chinese tastes, so that in the Far East Mahayana continued to flourish long after the destruction of the mother church in India. Buddhism was introduced into Korea in the fourth century A. D. and into Japan in the sixth.

Division into Sects.—With that knack of elaboration and hair-splitting for which the Oriental mind is so noted, the doctrines which Aṣvaghosa could explain in a short monograph were gradually expanded until Mahayana came to include as it does to-day about 84,000 doctrines. Now it is manifestly impossible for any one organization to deal

equally with each and every one of such an enormous number of ideas. It must needs content itself with emphasizing one especial phase or aspect of the religion taken as a whole, while admitting in a general way the truth of the various other aspects. Accordingly we have the various sects and schools of Mahayana Buddhism, each one of which considers the phase which it presents as being of especial importance and the most vital and essential to enlightenment. We find in them elements appealing to the scientific, to the religious, the philosophical, the mystical, and the occult types of mind, to the educated and the uneducated, the deep and the superficial, and in the various sects which exist to-day, every person must find at least one which appeals to his own type of mind.

These sects are far too numerous even to mention them all, much less to go into details over their teachings, but a word must be said concerning the most interesting and important ones. Speaking generally, as we have already noticed, the Mahayana sects may be grouped into two main classes, those who follow the path of salvation by works, and those who adhere to the principle of salvation by faith. In China the latter, while influential, have not succeeded in gaining universal acceptance, but in Japan they hold the allegiance of about half the Buddhist laymen.

The Tien-Tai Sect.—Chief among the former or salvation-by-works school, comes the Tien-tai (Japanese Tendai) sect, which is one of the most scholarly and influential. It was founded in China, its head monastery being on Mt. Tien-tai (whence its name), but it early manifested a missionary spirit and after having quickly overrun Chōsen or Korea, it was brought over from there into Japan about 600 A. D., being the first Buddhist sect to be introduced there. Owing to the power of Shotoku Taishi it succeeded in gaining a hold in spite of early adverse circumstances. From that time on, both in China and Japan, it occupied a

very prominent place, many of the emperors and nobles of both countries giving it their allegiance, owing to which fact it may be said to occupy a position somewhat analogous to that which the Anglican Church would occupy if disestablished, though within the last few centuries it has somewhat declined in influence. Its principal Sutra is the Sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law (*Saddharma Pundarika Sutra*), but the sect is not noted for any special feature or doctrine, though maintaining in a general way the ideas outlined above. It may be regarded as strictly orthodox, and manifested a tendency to persecute the innovations which Shinran, the founder of the Shin Shu, strove to bring about.

The Dhyana Sect.—Another powerful sect, both in China and Japan, is the one that goes by the scholastic name of the Sect of the Buddha Heart, but which is popularly known as the Dhyana sect (Jhanna in Pali, Shan in Chinese, and Zen in Japanese). The word signifies meditation or religious contemplation, and from this something of the nature of the sect may be understood. It is often termed the Quakerism of the Orient, since it declares the Truth to be locked up in the heart of each man, and teaches that it can be unlocked by a proper system of meditation. While other sects found their teachings upon one or two Sutras, Zen professes to revere them all equally, or really to ignore them all equally, since it looks upon all externals, such as Sutras, etc., as being purely incidental (and often obstacles) toward the gaining of enlightenment.

One of the most noted things about this sect is its system of *kung-ang* (Japanese *ko-an*), or words or phrases with a hidden meaning which are given to each student to elucidate. One or two instances will give the reader some idea of their general nature. A monk once asked Tung-Shang (Jap. Donzan, 806-869), "Who is the Buddha?" to which the master replied, "Three pounds of flax." A some-

what similar story is recorded of Mu Ping (Jap. Mokyo) who when asked the first principle of Buddhism replied, "What a large melon is this." Each of these ko-an are supposed to be answered by one word. Here indeed is esotericism with a vengeance!²⁸

Bodhidharma, in the sixth century, was the first one to introduce this sect from India into China, where his fame soon attracted several influential followers, which insured its success. From China it was brought over to Japan in 1191. It is considered the most philosophical of the sects, and has all along held the allegiance of a large portion of the upper classes of both countries.

The Mantra Sect.—Of almost purely Japanese origin is the Mantra (or, to give it the Japanese name, Shingon) sect, one of the most mystical and hair-splitting of them all. It dates back to the time of Kobu Daishi, in the ninth century, who after mastering the principles of several other schools, felt that he had a revelation commanding him to combine the teachings of Buddha with those of Shinto, the ancient native faith of Japan. As the result of his influence, both direct and indirect (for his indirect influence was even greater than his direct influence), so thoroughly were the foreign and the native faiths intermingled that when after the restoration of the imperial power in Japan, an attempt was made to separate them, it was found almost impossible to do so, so much had one faith borrowed from the other.

The Shingon Shu bases many of its doctrines upon a supposed work of Nagarjuna (see above) entitled the *Mahayana-śāstra-vyakya*, a deeply mystical work, but which outside of Shingon circles is generally supposed to be spurious, though it is certainly very ancient. As a matter of fact, Shingon approaches more nearly to Hinduism and Vedantism than does any other sect. Its most

²⁸ More about these ko-an may be found in the author's article "The Development of Japanese Buddhism," *The Open Court*, February, 1919, p. 107.

noticeable feature is its multiplicity of gods (most of them personifications) who are strangely and categorically arranged into thirteen main divisions, as well as the fourfold division of North, South, East, and West. In spite of this, however, Shingon is monotheistic (like the other Buddhist sects) in the sense that it admits that there is one supreme threefold Deity, an unmanifested God, sometimes called Abrakakia (corresponding to the Gnostic Abraxas), and a manifested God, Vairochana, corresponding to Amitabha (in Shingon, however, Amitabha is the title of a lower deity) or the Dharmakaya.

The Sukhavati or Jodo Sects.—Now we come to an examination of the salvation-by-faith-alone school. Researches have shown, contrary to general expectation, that the ideas presented by this school are considerably older than was at first considered possible, since we find them in their rudiments common in the times of Aṣṭvaghosa and Nagarjuna, and we often find these patriarchs preaching similar ideas themselves. The doctrine was then fully elaborated in China, where we find among others Zendo and Donran (to give them their Japanese names) bringing out the conception more explicitly.

It was not, however, until Buddhism was introduced into Japan that the doctrine as it exists to-day commanded any attention, when in the twelfth century we find Genku, or as he is sometimes called, Honen Shonin retiring from the Tendai sect to preach that for those for whom the narrow path of justification by one's own efforts was impossible, there was the path of justification by faith in Amitabha. Shodo-mon, the salvation-by-works school, taught that a man continued being reborn in this world until he attained Nirvana, which it must be remembered may be attained anywhere. Genku, however, while teaching that this was true, maintained that it was also true that

a believer might be reborn in the Pure Land, where enlightenment could be more easily obtained.

Genku retained the original discipline of Buddhism, but his illustrious disciple, Shinran Shonin, while changing but slightly the theology of his teacher, did away with the celibacy, the abstention, and the vegetarianism of the monks. Accordingly to-day, the priesthood of the sect which he started, the Shin Shu Jodo (True Sect of Pure Land) as it is called, is hereditary, the patriarchate of the various subsects passing from father to son.

The Nichiren Sect.—As was natural with the case of the Shin Shu, where the rules which he had laid down were abandoned, Gautama received but scant attention on their part, and his images were often cast aside. It was the sight of one of these battered images that was being played with by children in the street that proved to be the turning-point in the career of the famous Japanese priest, Nichiren, who was born A. D. 1222, the son of a fisherman. Except for this humble beginning, the life and character of Nichiren corresponds very closely to that of the Englishman Wesley. Nichiren after his conversion abandoned the more conservative and staid ways of spreading his gospel and revived the practice of vehement street preaching. Like his English parallel, Nichiren was somewhat bitter in his denunciation of the other existing sects, and alone among the present Mahayana schools, the sect which he started still maintains an attitude of exclusiveness and hostility.

Nichiren had little to add to the religious speculation of his time save a rabid zeal for devotional affairs. He assumed an attitude midway between the salvation-by-works and salvation-by-faith schools, declaring that works were of importance, but that the reciting of the phrase *Nan-myo-ho-ren-gekyo* was also of great benefit. With the Tendai sect, he took as his principal Sutra the *Sad-*

dharma Pundarika Sutra (the Sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law), but so much emphasis did he and his followers lay upon it that they are often called the bibliolaters of Buddhism. Nichiren has at present about two million followers, almost all of them in Japan, and they are chiefly known for their gaiety and light-heartedness in the observance of their religious customs in contradistinction to the somewhat graver behavior of their fellow Buddhists.

The Relation of the Sects.—Such, then, are the more important and interesting of the sects of Mahayanism. In addition to these, there are also numerous others, but the latter are either of too little numerical importance or else their doctrines are possessed of too little distinction to warrant special attention. Furthermore, there are in Japan and China three Hinayana sects. These have neither priests nor temples but are merely studied by the other sects. Finally, there is Lamaism, the religion of Thibet, differing in many respects from the other Mahayana sects but lying outside the scope of this discussion. In Japan all the sects are still flourishing, though they have practically all broken into smaller subdivisions, but in China, where Buddhism is at a much lower ebb than in Japan, the only divisions that exist are between the priests of the Yellow Robe, in which are combined more or less perfectly the different sects which have been enumerated above, and those of the Blue Robe, or the Lamaistic priests, who acknowledge the Grand Lama of Thibet as their spiritual leader.

As has already been seen, however, while Mahayana is divided into many sects and factions, yet almost universally do they give recognizance to one another, each claiming for itself only that it emphasizes the more important features of the Mahayana faith. Even the schools of salvation by faith and by works differ but little in reality, since the Sukhavati sects teach that while by faith a man may gain admittance into the Pure Land after death where it is

easier for him to realize the "truth which shall make him free" (to use Christian verbiage), yet must he come back to the world for the salvation of all; the opposite party teaches that while a man is constantly being reborn on earth, yet must he finally reach the Pure Land and Nirvana. They are but two ways to the same end, says the Buddhist.

The Present Position of Mahayana.—A word must be said before closing concerning the present condition of Mahayana Buddhism. Soon after the opening of both Japan and China to the world, Buddhism underwent a gradual but rapid decline both on account of the Christian missionaries on the one hand and of materialism on the other. Many of the monasteries were deserted and were sold or turned over to the government to be used for other purposes, and it seemed to all parties as if the days of Buddhism were numbered. Within the last few years, however, a reaction has set in, a reaction which promises to be quite as radical if not more so than when the pendulum swung the other way. When Christianity first entered China and Japan, Buddhism had, to no small extent, sunk into decay. Lately, however, with the advent of opposition, has come a revival of the old missionary spirit, and accordingly we find Buddhist schools and colleges being erected, newspapers and magazines started, and extensive missionary courses given, which have resulted in an increase of religious fervor and piety. In addition to all this, we even find at times extensive plans being made for missionizing abroad. It is impossible, of course, to tell what the future of this new movement will be, and possibly the revival of the Buddhist faith may be illusive and temporary, but certainly if present indications are correct, the Phoenix of the new Mahayana Buddhism is arising from the ashes of the old.

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